



The award *for* the BEST PUBLIC POLICY BOOK by a Canadian

DONNER PRIZE ANNOUNCES THE 2019/2020 SHORTLIST

EMBARGOED TO April 15, 2020, 10 am EDT

TORONTO, April 15, 2020 – Ken Whyte, Chair of the Donner Canadian Foundation, today announced the shortlist for the 2019/2020 Donner Prize, the award recognizing the best public policy book by a Canadian. Given the current situation regarding COVID-19, the gala awards presentation, usually held in the spring will be postponed until the fall. However, given the timeliness of the books selected for the shortlist, it was agreed that the finalists be announced now, to give them as much attention and opportunity for discussion as possible.

“The Donner Prize has always shone a spotlight on books that are exceptional works of public policy research,” said Mr. Whyte. “This year is no exception, with books on topics that are quite literally ripped from the headlines. They will undoubtedly provoke debate. And these books reflect the challenges facing all levels of governance and policy. Policy affects us all, and books that probe hard questions, that suggest guidelines and direction for the future, become essential reading.”

David Dodge, Jury Chair, stated that “The purpose of the Donner Prize – to encourage and reward the hard work of researching and writing about the policy dilemmas we face as a society and a nation – is more critical in today’s media environment than ever. Our shortlist reflects issues that, until very recently were centre stage in our national dialogue, and given our history, will be again – the coming decline of global population, Canada’s relationship with China, the pipeline debate, First Nations financing and the future of Canadian culture in a digital age. These books are exemplars of the goals of the Donner Prize, presenting sound and original research and analysis, in a manner that is accessible to a general audience.”

The prestigious Donner Prize, founded in 1998, annually rewards excellence and innovation in public policy writing by Canadians. In bestowing this award, the Donner Canadian Foundation seeks to broaden policy debates, and to make an original and meaningful contribution to policy discourse, all of which will contribute to an even stronger and more inclusive Canadian democracy.

The 2019/2020 shortlist titles were chosen from a field of 74 submissions. The winner receives \$50,000 while each other nominated title receives \$7,500.

The 2019/2020 Donner Prize finalists are:

EMPTY PLANET: The Shock of Global Population Decline by Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson (Signal/McClelland & Stewart)

LIVING WITH CHINA: A Middle Power Finds Its Way by Wendy Dobson (University of Toronto Press)

THE WEALTH OF FIRST NATIONS by Thomas Flanagan (Fraser Institute)

BREAKDOWN: The Pipeline Debate and the Threat to Canada's Future by Dennis McConaghy
(Dundurn Press)

THE TANGLED GARDEN: A Canadian Cultural Manifesto for the Digital Age by Richard Stursberg
with Stephen Armstrong (James Lorimer & Co.)

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Shortlisted authors and Jury Chair David Dodge are available for comment and interview.

For further information, please contact Sheila Kay; 647-391-9829

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Donner Prize 2019/2020 Shortlist Jury Citations

Empty Planet: The Shock of Global Population Decline

Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson (Signal/McClelland & Stewart)

This book is a timely corrective to the general inattention to declining global population. Many still think of population growth as the problem in a world laden with environmental degradation, climate change, etc.; however, accelerating urbanization and the education of women point to declining fertility. This thesis has important policy implications, which Bricker and Ibbitson outline, especially with future immigration policies, as well as long-term economic forecasting. Original, challenging, engagingly written, *Empty Planet* also touches on attendant issues of population decline, including impacts on religion, Indigenous populations, and agriculture.

Living With China: A Middle Power Finds Its Way

Wendy Dobson (University of Toronto Press)

Given China's emerging role in the world, and its current fraught relationship with Canada, *Living With China* is an au courant and informative look at a critical issue. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of establishing a workable and profitable relationship with China. In this book, Dobson, a Senior Fellow at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, provides a historic perspective, a detailed description of China's economic and political strategy, as well as strong policy recommendations for a path forward.

Wealth of First Nations

Thomas Flanagan (Fraser Institute)

Clearly directed to the key issue of how to improve the economic and social well-being of First Nations, this book is relevant to a priority, and ongoing, policy issue. Flanagan's analysis of ways that transfers could be structured is quite original, and a potentially ground-breaking contribution from both a statistical and policy perspective. This concise book is a valuable addition to the debate, and it should promote discussion and dialogue on how to move forward to balance economic development and government investment.

Breakdown: The Pipeline Debate and the Threat to Canada’s Future

Dennis McConaghy (Dundurn Press)

Breakdown addresses arguably one of the most contentious and consequential set of policy issues facing Canada today – the nexus of resource development, climate change, Indigenous rights and Alberta alienation. It presents the history of four pipeline projects and overlays the political decisions that have resulted in many projects not being supported or being delayed significantly. It is a necessary contribution to the discussion of the perspectives of Albertans and of resource developers generally. The book is well researched, balanced and outlines several pragmatic strategies to help Canada find a way through these issues.

The Tangled Garden: A Canadian Cultural Manifesto for the Digital Age

Richard Stursberg with Stephen Armstrong (James Lorimer & Co.)

The issue of ensuring Canadian culture survives the technological change in the production and distribution of digital content is front and centre in policy debate in Parliament. Here industry veteran Stursberg clearly outlines the threat from FAANG (Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Google), providing both historical context and explicit recommendations, including a clarified definition of Canadian content, as well as possible approaches to subsidizing that content. Stursberg paints a very dim portrait of the status quo and conveys a sense of urgent need for policy action to level the playing field.